

Email Management
*Information and Records
Management (IRM)*



Email.



Email Management at UC

This hand-out is intended to help staff manage their outlook in-boxes for their University email accounts and to provide tips and suggestions on email etiquette.

Emails are University Records

Email messages sent or received using a University email account that refer to or contain information on or about University business whether from within or outside the University are owned by the University. This applies to all University emails whether or not the equipment, software, or facilities used to create or store the email record are owned by the University. As such all email which you create during your employment at UC, unless for specific teaching or research purposes, is part of the University's corporate record and may be accessed under the Official Information Act or Privacy Act.

Emails are considered to be records with as much importance as formal documents and they must be managed according to the General Disposal Authority for University records. Further information is provided in this document on saving emails and more information about the General Disposal Authority can be found on the Information and Records Management (IRM) website or by contacting the IRM team.

Saving Records

With the heavy use of email in business processes it is important to ensure that those emails which record important decisions are kept as an official University record. Sometimes an email is the only official record of certain decisions. Be aware of this in your own work and save key emails to your Department file share or SharePoint site.

The easiest way to do this is to print the email to the Amyuni PDF Convertor print queue. This will create a PDF of the email. To do this under

the printer dropdown menu select 'Amyuni PDF Convertor'. Select Print. In the pop up box select your location to save to, and then name the file.

Remember to rename the file to something useful along the file naming guidelines, otherwise you can end up with many files named un-useful titles such as 'FW:RE:Meeting 13 May' instead of 'Procurement Paper for Council Meeting 13 May 2013'.

University records must be saved in line with the General Disposal Authority for NZ Universities which is mandated under the Public Records Act. For more information on this please see the IRM Process Manual, the IRM website or contact the IRM team (links at the end of this document).

Etiquette

Having good email etiquette and following best practice when writing emails helps to ensure that you do not create any privacy breaches or other problems for yourself or the University in the future. Remember that every email you write as a University employee is discoverable (can be found and retrieved via searching Outlook) and may end up being supplied to an external person through an Official Information Act request or a personal data request. Content of an email can also be inadvertently seen by the wrong recipient if it is forwarded by accident or emailed to the incorrect address. For more information about personal information and what should and should not be included in an email please see section 6.7 of the Privacy Policy.

'Don't write anything in an email that you wouldn't write on a postcard'

| Do | Don't |
|--|---|
| <p>Be careful when talking about students/staff/stakeholders. Always imagine that your email can be seen by the person you are talking about, and if in doubt pick up the phone instead. Remember that even seemingly mild comments can turn into the 'smoking gun' in certain situations.</p> | <p>Don't put anything slanderous/libellous in an email. This is stating something false which would be damaging to the person's reputation.</p> |
| <p>Do be sensible when managing your records. Not creating records or deleting them incorrectly may breach employment conditions or even be illegal.</p> | <p>Don't send a message when you are angry. Save it to your drafts and come back to it later with a clear head, or get someone else to read through it.</p> |
| <p>Read your message before you send it. Remember that emails don't carry visual clues and language or tone can be easily misconstrued.</p> | <p>Don't use read receipts on every message. Only use if you are unsure if your recipients will receive the email.</p> |
| <p>Make the subject line descriptive – if an action is required state this.*</p> | <p>Don't overuse the high importance '!', your recipients will learn to ignore them.</p> |
| <p>Change the subject of the message if the topic of the conversation changes.</p> | <p>Don't use ALL CAPS – it sounds like you are shouting.</p> |
| <p>Keep all messages short, to the point and professional.</p> | <p>Don't send attachments when you could send a link – particularly in meeting requests as this sends a copy to everyone and adds to the server load.</p> |
| <p>Use bold to draw attention to people's names or actions where required.</p> | <p>Don't write something you wouldn't want everyone in the University to read – you can never be sure of where an email will end up.</p> |
| <p>Limit the number of people you send a message to. Put those who need to respond in the 'To' line and those who are just being informed in the 'Cc' line.</p> | <p>Don't use 'funny' fonts. They are hard to read and look unprofessional.</p> |
| <p>Acknowledge messages which need a more extensive response if you cannot do something right away. Manage people's expectations.</p> | <p>Don't forward emails before checking the full email text – large email streams can hold surprises.</p> |
| <p>Explain to people when you CC them in on an email.</p> | <p>Do not use bullying behaviour e.g. don't Cc your superior or someone else's superior in on every email.</p> |

*Note that long or non-descriptive titles cause additional problems when emails are added to SharePoint. The subject line pulls through as the title of the document

Emailing groups and shared mailboxes

For information on emailing to groups of students please see the UC Policy 'Group Emails to Enrolled Students'.

If you are sending an internal email to more than 25 people a mail tip will notify you of this. Mail tips are the notifications which appear above the 'Send' box in a drafted email.

If you regularly email a group of people consider creating a distribution group. This can help ensure that all required people get all the appropriate messages and prevent any issues around autocompleting of names etc. Contact the ICTS helpdesk to see if creating a group is appropriate for you, or create your own Contact Group with Outlook.

Security

It is important to be careful in your email behaviour. Always review the content and recipients before you hit send. One wrong address and you can easily create a privacy breach.

UC has an email disclaimer which is appended to all emails when they leave the UC system externally. It is important for legal reasons that this is maintained and is not altered for your own purposes. Do not append additional disclaimers to email signatures. Further information on this can be found in the Privacy Policy.

If you are concerned about security issues, or you work in a 'high-risk' area (we would define high-risk as an area where you regularly email external contacts or groups of people) there are things you can easily do to mitigate your risk.

For example you can turn on mail tips which notify you about various features. Here are some measures you can take:

- Turn on the mail tip which notifies you when your email message is going to external recipients. To do this: In Outlook select the 'File' tab, select 'Options', select 'Mail', under 'MailTips' select the 'MailTips Options' button. There are various functions which can be used. In this case tick 'External recipient', click 'OK'
- Turn off Auto-Complete for email addresses. This is the feature which displays email suggestions as you type. It is very easy to select the wrong one. To turn this off: In Outlook select the 'File' tab, select 'Options', select 'Mail', under 'Send messages' un-tick the check box 'Use Auto-Complete List to suggest names when typing in the To, Cc and Bcc lines', click 'OK'
- Turn on the Spellcheck function. This requires you to take a minute and revise and often gives

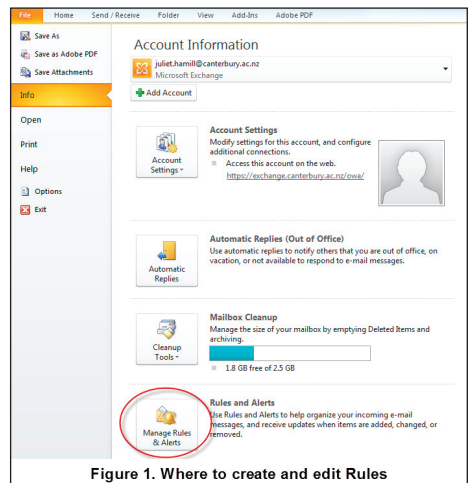


Figure 1. Where to create and edit Rules

you a second chance to notice any problems. To turn this on: In Outlook select the 'File' tab, select 'Options', select 'Mail', under 'Compose messages' tick the check box 'Always check spelling before sending'; click 'OK'.

- Defer the sending time of your emails. This function allows you to put a time of a minute or more, on the sending of emails. This can help stop those "oh no" moments. To do this follow the below steps from your Outlook:
 1. Select the 'File' tab
 2. Select 'Manage Rules & Alerts'
 3. In the dialog box which pops up select 'New Rule'. This will cause another pop up to appear called the 'Rules Wizard'
 4. Under 'Start from a blank Rule', select 'Apply rule on messages I send', then click the 'Next' button
 5. Click 'Next' again, which will apply this rule to every message you send (or select criteria to limit the application)
 6. Select the check box 'Defer delivery by a number of minutes'
 7. In Step 2, click on 'A number of', then select the number of minutes to defer by and select 'OK'
 8. Select 'Next'
 9. Name the rule 'Defer on sent items' and select 'Finish'.

Organising your Inbox

Organising your inbox in outlook can make your working day more efficient and effective. Below are some ideas for ways to help you do this. Please remember that Outlook is not a secure repository for record keeping and important email records should be saved to a file share or SharePoint as appropriate.

- Create sensible folders for the way you work e.g. create folders for specific areas of your work or for projects. Don't put folders under your inbox, put them at the same level. This keeps your email totals down and prevents your system from slowing
- Always create a folder called '1-Reference' and '2-Personal'. These two folders will appear at the top of your folder list and allow you to easily drag and drop items out of your inbox
- Set your categories to colour code your inbox and help prioritise your work. You can use a combination of topics, activities, locations or priorities e.g. Planning, Reading or Meeting
- Use rules to send emails from listservs, contact groups and distribution lists into folders for later reading
- Apply rules to divert emails. For example if you do a lot of meeting organisation, create a rule which puts automatic meeting responses without content into a separate folder, or, directly into deleted items
- Set emails sent only to you, to show in a different colour. To do: Go to the 'View' tab on the Outlook toolbar, select 'View Settings'. In the pop up box select 'Conditional Formatting', click 'Add', type 'Me', click 'Font', under 'Colour' select a different colour and click OK. Click 'Condition', next to the 'Where I am' tick box select 'the only person on the To line', select 'OK'
- Notifications – if you are easily distracted or you receive a large amount of emails it can be a good idea to change your notification settings. You can turn off various alerts such as the notification sound and the desktop alert. To do: In Outlook select the 'File' tab, select 'Options', this will open a new pop up box. Select 'Mail'. The options are available under 'Message arrival'

- Flag on send. When you send a message to which you require a response, you can select the 'Follow Up' flag prior to sending the email. You can change the timeframe on this from a day to next week etc. This is incredibly useful and puts a task into your tasks bar as a reminder. This can then be renamed for clarity if needed. Similarly, when you promise to do something in a message, you can flag it for yourself as a reminder
- Use the Conversations view. This is useful to see the whole email discussion in one stream. It has the advantage of showing the whole discussion even if specific emails are in separate folders. To do: Select 'View' on the Outlook toolbar, tick the 'Show as Conversations' box
- Use the 'Clean Up' function. This button is available on the main Outlook toolbar. You can use it to clean up specific conversations, folders or subfolders. It works by eliminating messages which are completely contained in later emails from the same conversation (note that if the subject line has changed during the conversation it will not consider these as part of the same email chain). Deletion in this context is approved under GDA 1.2.2.

For further tips and helpful ideas see the Microsoft Best Practices for Outlook 2010 document available in the help section of Outlook or directly here:
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-nz/outlook-help/best-practices-for-outlook-2010-HA102459562.aspx>

For more information please see the IRM website or contact the IRM team:
<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/irm/records@canterbury.ac.nz>

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Information breach – email sent to an incorrect recipient



As part of Sandra's job she regularly sends out emails to groups of staff/stakeholders in a Committee. Each email contains the upcoming papers for the Committee meeting.

On Friday, Sandra is in a rush to complete her work

and leave for the weekend. She quickly types in the email addresses and hits send. She neglects to double check the email addresses before sending the email.

On Monday morning Sandra comes in to work and finds that when she sent the email she had utilised the auto-complete address function and had sent the email to two incorrect people. These people have now received confidential information about the University in the attached documents. One of them is threatening to go to the media with the confidential information which they now have.

Issue: An information breach has been created and confidential documents or information may turn up in the media.

Risks: Reputational, Financial, Commercial

Solution: Ask ICTS to create an email group for regularly emailed cohorts or create your own Contact Group in Outlook. Additionally in emails of this sort, where able, send links to documents rather than attachments. Recipients then have to have the appropriate security permissions to access the documents.

Case Study 2: An Official Information Act (OIA) request reveals inappropriate email correspondence



Stewart deals directly with students some of whom have very problematic issues. In general, he manages to not get too worked up about anything, but one student who has had many complaints has managed to really irritate him.

This student comes in with another complaint and Stewart sends an email to a colleague letting them know that this student will be heading their way to further their complaint. In the email Stewart says 'That annoying prat (you know the one) is on his way over to see you. Expect him shortly.' This email becomes part of a stream of correspondence about the student which has the student's name mentioned in it.

One year later...

The University receives an Official Information Act request from the student requesting all correspondence relating to them. Relevant staff search their email correspondence and retrieve all relevant documents. The email which Stewart sent is included within this. Once the requestor sees the stream involving Stewart's email he decides that the University has been working against him and resolves to take his case further.

Issue: A seemingly casual remark can have major consequences.

Risks: Reputational, Financial, Legal

Solution: Never put anything slanderous or derogatory in an email, and always maintain a professional tone

Case Study 3: Lost decisions in an email, lead to loss of revenue

A senior staff member made an agreement with a tenant that they would pay only a nominal rental fee for ten years on a property owned by the University. This agreement was not recorded formally on the contract or accompanying documents, only via email.

This staff member then left employment at the University without saving the content of this email anywhere.

3 years later...

The University realises it has not been getting the rent it expects from a tenanted property. They search the documentation around this to see if there is any reason for the discrepancy. Finding no documentation they start proceedings against the tenant for the lack of payment.

Matters escalate rapidly and the University ends up in the Courts and the media for the case. The tenant produces the email which shows that the University agreed to the arrangement.

Issue: A lack of documentation leads to exposure in the eyes of the law and the media.

Risks: Financial, Reputational

Solution: Always save important decision documents, even those in email format.

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